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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MEXICO 002234

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/28/2019  
TAGS: [MX](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#)  
SUBJECT: POOR PERFORMANCE OF PT MEANS LUCIA MORETT FACES  
POSSIBLE EXTRADITION

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Classified By: Acting Political Minister Counselor James P. Merz. Reason: 1.4 (b), (d).

11. (SBU) Summary. Wanted by Colombia and Ecuador for her connections to the FARC, Lucia Morett, a Mexican student from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), did not win a plurinominal seat for the Chamber of Deputies and therefore will not have immunity to protect her from extradition. Morett was at a FARC camp in Ecuador in March 2008 when the Colombian government attacked it and killed Raul Reyes (second in command of the FARC) along with 24 others, including four other Mexican students. After returning to Mexico, Morett faced domestic and international investigations. Separately, in a bid to lend her symbolic support and support her effort to secure judicial immunity, the leftist Labor Party (PT) offered her a spot on its list of plurinominal candidates for the Chamber of Deputies. If the PT had won enough votes, Morett could have secured three years of immunity from extradition. But as PT won less than 4% of the vote, it will not be able to seat her. Therefore she is now fighting extradition, claiming she is a political target with no involvement in terrorist activities. End Summary.

Preemptive Politicking  
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12. (C) In a bid to provide Morett with immunity from potential extradition or other legal proceedings, PT offered Morett positions on the party's plurinominal lists for both Mexico City's local congress and the federal Chamber of Deputies. According to PT leaders quoted in the press, while in negotiations with the party weeks before the elections, Morett rejected its offer to be second on the list for the local legislature and instead chose a lower slot on the federal register. This proved to be a miscalculation, as the PT's final vote tally was too low to secure her a seat and thus immunity.

Colombia Seeks Arrest, Ecuador Seeks Extradition  
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13. (SBU) On July 3, two days before midterm elections in Mexico, Colombia filed a request with Interpol to issue a red notice for Morett's capture after a Bogota judge issued an arrest warrant for her on terrorism charges. The Colombian

government has accused her of conspiring to commit terrorist acts, financing terrorism, and administering resources related to terrorism. The Mexican government has been slow to respond to the Interpol alert, and a Mexican judge has not yet issued a warrant for Morett's arrest. Mexico will not take her into custody nor extradite her unless the Attorney General's Office (PGR) specifically seeks an arrest warrant from a Mexican judge. According to Morett's family members, she remains in a "safe place," and some reports say she is even seeking refuge in Canada or, more likely, Venezuela.

¶4. (SBU) On July 15, Ecuador officially requested Morett's extradition on charges of crimes against domestic security, once it was clear that the PT had not gained enough votes to secure her a seat in the Chamber. President Rafael Correa, who after the bombing initially allowed Morett to stay in Ecuador as a tourist to receive medical attention, has distanced himself from the proceedings, arguing that by formally requesting extradition his administration has merely "complied" with the judicial request to bring Morett to Ecuador to stand trial. He appears, at least publicly, to have misgivings about pressing Mexico for her extradition, possibly lessening prospects she will ultimately be sent to Ecuador to face trial. (Note: Immediately following the bombing, Morett was granted refuge in Nicaragua. End Note.)

¶5. (C) Colombia is suspicious of Ecuador's motivations in seeking extradition. The Deputy Chief of Mission of the Colombian Embassy in Mexico, Jaime Acosta, told Poloff that he believes Morett would face much lighter charges if she is extradited to Ecuador instead of Colombia. He suspected that Ecuador is most likely trying to protect Morett by keeping her out of Colombia and at the same time trying to rile Bogota by preempting its own request. Nevertheless, without

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offering a concrete explanation as to why, Acosta suggested that Mexico is more likely to send Morett to Colombia than Ecuador, and that Colombia had made a special request to the GOM regarding the issue.

#### Strategies for Her Defense: Politically Motivated Accusations

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¶6. (SBU) With Morett's hopes for constitutional protection lost following the midterm elections, leftist parties (most notably PT and PRD) and other supporters are presently pursuing a legal strategy in her defense. Her supporters maintain that her extradition is politically motivated and the 2006 Treaty on Extradition between Mexico and Ecuador should not apply. Her defenders argue she is neither a terrorist nor a member of the FARC, and that she was in FARC's camp the day of the bombing only to study leftist resistance groups. While her legal team does not clearly explain or back up its defense, they claim to have extensive evidence to prove their case. They also state that Mexico has ample legal room to deny the extradition. If necessary, they will seek "amparos" and other legal tools to protect Morett. PRD officials have also stated they will go to Ecuador to negotiate with Correa in order to protect her; they secured a non-binding resolution in the Permanent Session of Congress earlier this month, recommending to Calderon that she not be remanded to Ecuador.

#### Public Opinion Divided, Subdued

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¶7. (SBU) Morett has her supporters and detractors, but neither side has earned significant media coverage of late. The most vocal opponent against Morett is the Citizen's Council for Security, Justice and Peace, a civil society organization that has filed complaints with PGR demanding investigations of Morett. The organization has even made trips to Ecuador and Colombia in efforts to press the GOM to pursue the case. Despite such efforts, while there are

regular updates in the press, particularly in the left-leaning Mexico City daily La Jornada published out of UNAM, the reports tend to be short and factual rather than passionately opinionated. On the surface, the immediate aftermath of the bombing in Ecuador appears to have generated more public interest than Morett's current legal battle. Public interest has now waned, perhaps in part because this is not the first time someone has sought to avoid legal trouble by seeking a Congressional seat.

18. (C) Comment: The Interpol red notice and the request for extradition put pressure on Mexico to move on Morett. As she lost her bid for a seat in the House of Deputies, Morett cannot seek protection behind the cloak of immunity. Patricia Espinosa, Secretary of Foreign Relations, insists publicly that her department is actively studying the case but that legal proceedings could take years. With over 5,000 pages from Ecuador to review and thousands more anticipated from Colombia, Mexico will likely drag its feet before having to decide if and where it will send her. Mexico's apparent reluctance to make a timely decision on Morett's case suggests it has misgivings about arresting and extraditing her -- presumably for internal political reasons -- but is similarly not keen on refusing the requests of its regional partners. Visit Mexico City's Classified Web Site at <http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/wha/mexicocity> and the North American Partnership Blog at <http://www.intelink.gov/communities/state/nap/>

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